



Stage Two

Language Readiness

About this Stage

In Stage Two, the learner is exposed to a richer language experience. He learns that objects have names and that actions have words to express them. The learner is not asked to identify objects, but simply to be a sponge and absorb information. This Stage develops receptive language and pre-linguistic skills.

About the Software



Finding software at this Stage can be challenging because we are moving from a content-light to a content-rich environment. Keep in mind that you still need to consider the appropriate access device and procedures. In addition to using software titles recommended for Stage Two, look for menu settings to help you modify Stage One software for Stage Two learning.

Look for software that offers brief, repetitive, and consistent learner prompts. Use the type of prompt (auditory, visual or multisensory) proven successful during Stage One so that the interaction does not confuse or distract the learner from the content. As in Stage One, reward the learner's use of the device. If he randomly activates a target by using his access device, reinforce the language content, whether or not the selection was deliberate. Say, for example, "Look, that's a dog!"

Continue to use age-appropriate software. For example, software presenting traditional nursery rhyme content would be most appropriate for younger children, whereas software depicting popular music might be more appropriate for teens and adults. Some software allows you to customize the content by adding digital photos of things that are personally familiar to the learner.

Some aspects of the learner's behavior may be measured and recorded within the software. For example, some software programs keep track of the learner's time on task. You can create a portfolio of observations so that improvement can be noted across several behaviors simultaneously and over time. While raw data may be collected for consideration of the learner's progress, conditions for performance and content presentation must be carefully tracked over time. We can only expect a learner to make use of vocabulary or language to which he has been repeatedly exposed. In short, a learner will not understand the meaning of a word or concept unless he has seen numerous examples.

Many other conditions in the learning environment should also be considered. These include

- ❖ the type of prompt or cue, which occurs before the learner responds;
- ❖ the type of reinforcement or feedback, which happens after the learner has responded;
- ❖ the position of the device;
- ❖ the screen presentation (animation or no animation, number of objects shown, etc.);
- ❖ the drawn or photographic representation; and so on.

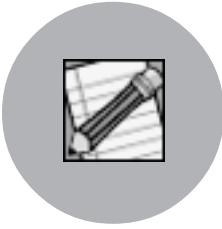
Software Selection Tips



At Stage Two, look for software that offers:

- ✓ a variety of objects and actions that are named
- ✓ a consistent way of naming objects and actions
- ✓ no requirement for the learner to identify objects
- ✓ different representations of objects: photographs, drawings, color symbols, etc.
- ✓ text and/or symbol labels
- ✓ the capability to be customized with pictures or symbols that are meaningful and familiar
- ✓ opportunities for learners to imitate actions
- ✓ age-appropriate graphics and animation
- ✓ built-in access features for the learner's best method of input

Relevant Issues



Building Receptive Vocabulary

The Stage Two learner has mastered the Cause and Effect behavior at Stage One. However, because he is not yet likely to be talking or vocalizing for a purpose, it is important to consider the language environment.

During Stage Two the learner builds a language-based foundation for learning for the rest of his life. The focus is on building an understanding of words and concepts. Language learning is a continuous process. Learners first become aware that language is made up of individual words, that words are made up of sounds, and that words and sounds convey meaning. At first, the learner does not understand language, but does respond to sounds. Constant exposure to communication patterns, such as turn-taking, helps learners understand language use. Even though the learner is not using words and there is no intentional communication, he is still learning how the language patterns and interactions work.

A learner's ability to comprehend language, to process information, and to learn educational material provides us with information that helps us make decisions about communication skills development. Before we can expect a learner to communicate effectively, he must be exposed to and understand words and symbols. Once he understands a word or symbol, then he can apply it, or use it to express himself at a later Stage.

A key strategy in developing emerging literacy skills is to very deliberately expose the learner to all forms of written communication, including text and symbols, even though he is not yet reading or communicating. We call this creating a print-rich environment. For years it has been understood that exposing learners to all forms of emerging literacy that are meaningful promotes language acquisition (King-DeBaun and Musselwhite, 1997). Many believe that the primary literacy experiences begin during infancy. Consider, for example, parents who read bedtime stories to very young toddlers well before they even think about teaching their children to read.

Stage Two Focus:

- **exposure to named objects and actions**
- **continued control over the input device**

Emerging literacy is founded on the belief that exposing developing learners to the skills needed in order to learn to read and communicate well will result in a natural development of related language-based skills.

Pairing objects, photographs and symbols with text is believed to help a learner recognize that word or symbol without the picture at a later literacy phase. This will also help learners develop an understanding of symbols in the environment, which they may later need for communication.

Language readiness happens because of repeated exposure to new things and their names. The key is to create appropriate exposure to language patterns and vocabulary that the learner is either already beginning to understand or needs to learn. It is important to involve a speech/language pathologist who is an expert on receptive language to help determine the learner's ability to comprehend the language level incorporated in the program. Finding and customizing the right content helps to build and document the vocabulary understood by the learner. For example, if the learner is presented with a series of pictures, be sure that some of the pictures include people or objects that are familiar to him.

Phonemic Awareness Begins

Research has shown the importance of exposing learners to both the sounds of words and their labels (Cunningham, 2000; King-DeBaun and Musselwhite, 1997). Words are made up of a distinct combination of sounds. In order for learners to eventually learn to read and write successfully, a strong foundation in phonics knowledge is critical. The ability to hear how sounds work is rooted in exposure—listening to sounds over and over to build familiarity.

One component of phonemic awareness is the ability to hear when words rhyme. That ability is developed through repeated exposure to rhyming words and patterns, mostly through story books, poems, chants, finger plays, nursery rhymes and music. The ability to recite and/or recognize nursery rhymes is one of the best indications of a learner's potential to read. Research in the area of emerging literacy tells us that the rhythm and rhyme inherent in nursery rhymes are important vehicles for the beginning development of phonemic awareness (Cunningham, 2000).

Once learners can hear rhymes, they begin to isolate word patterns. This skill will ultimately become an important early reading skill, as learners start to read rhyming words by changing the beginning sound and making rhyming pattern sounds.

Adult Guidance

It is very important to select the right software, and then to plan how best to use the software to stimulate language acquisition within a consistent and stimulating environment. Allow the learner's level of interest and attention to set the amount of time on task, unless medical needs dictate otherwise. Learners may skip around in the program, repeat targets over and over, or set their own pace. Try not to interfere other than to repeat the vocabulary being presented. Do not ask questions to check for understanding at this Stage. Your interactions center around reinforcing access behavior as well as the target vocabulary as it is presented, and offering extension activities as discussed below.

The Emotional Side of Learning

The key to success at this Stage is being consistent with the use of language in the environment. Take time to label objects verbally, confirming what the software is presenting to the learner and pointing out the same object in the more immediate environment. This will help the learner generalize his understanding of a word and his comfort with its use. (For additional ideas on generalization, see the Extension Activities that follow.)

Stage One learning did not involve significant content, but Stage Two learning is all about building the language foundation needed to understand every other successive Stage. Patiently offering the information without expecting a response requires persistence. Learners are building a language foundation upon which the rest of the Stages depend.

Extension Activities



Representation of Objects

Language is representative of real objects and actions. Pictures or symbols in isolation carry limited meaning. Therefore, activities to extend understanding are important. We want learners to understand that the object is the same in a photograph, in a representational drawing, and in real life. Is an apple always red? No! We have to provide opportunities for learners to develop an understanding of the nuances in the ways that words can work.

Have real objects nearby that are the same as the ones that the learner sees in the software program. When the program names the object, present that object to the learner immediately and name it again, thus extending understanding. Finally, pair the object with both the text label and its representational symbol for learners who will eventually need to use symbols. Do the same with actions and concepts.

Consistent exposure to real objects helps shape the learner toward a more deliberate use of the language connected to the object. It also creates a more generalized understanding of a concept, helping the learner move from understanding a drawing or photograph to connecting it to the real object, action or tangible characteristic.

Familiar Objects in New Settings

Seeing the object used in other settings is also important. Play games, read books and sing songs that use the same words in other settings, thus extending language understanding. For example, if the learner is working on the names for animals, show pictures in the software, read animal books, sing “Old MacDonald,” and take a trip to a farm. Such activities will help develop a full understanding of the consistent use of words across settings and activities.

Identify objects by name when you discuss what’s going on in the environment. Say, for example, “The children are playing on the swings” as you pass through the park. This gives the learner exposure to language appropriate for that context.

Imitation Skills

Another dimension of interaction with the learner is to foster imitation skills. A learner's ability to imitate actions is very important at this stage of development. Linguistically, he begins to recognize that gestures can convey meaning, even if he cannot yet verbalize words or actions on his own.

Cognitively, the learner is able to reproduce what he sees, either on the computer screen or in his environment. This may be the first time that you can observe that the learner is absorbing and responding to content.

To encourage imitation skills, give the learner opportunities to imitate simple actions. Sing songs (for example, "Wheels on the Bus") or say rhymes (for example, "Eeensie Weensie Spider") that can be accompanied by hand movements. You can also use software that presents easily-imitated actions. While the music is playing within the electronic learning environment, hand gestures could accompany the experience within the real world environment.

The Learner's World

Label objects in the learner's world with text, drawings and/or symbols. Each text label should be significant, helping the learner understand that the label symbolizes a concept. A text label, paired with a picture, may help learners understand the relationship between an object and its printed name. These labels serve to represent objects or actions just as spoken language does, and promote the association between the spoken word and the representational symbol. For example, label the real toilet with a picture of the symbol representing a toilet. This way the learner begins to associate the spoken word with actions and the symbol representing that specific object.

This is the time to introduce a single message device labeled with one symbol. With a light-tech device such as this, the learner can deliver simple prerecorded messages with the press of a button. Examples of effective single message devices are the BIGmack® and the One-Step by AbleNet™, Inc.

Create personalized vocabulary-building activities specific to the words and objects that the learner needs most. For example, use a word processor or any other software that offers a slide show feature that lets you advance to the next slide (page) with a single click (switch press). Insert picture files so that each switch press presents an image of a special person, favorite toy or pet, or any other word. Your interaction with the learner doesn't change. As the learner "turns" the pages, name the person or object, then encourage the next switch press (click).

About the Learner



Observable Characteristics

Watch for indications that the learner

- ❖ uses eye gaze and/or utterances to convey communicative intent
- ❖ uses other personal, familiar behavioral cues to convey communicative intent
- ❖ uses body language and/or head orientation to convey recognition of objects
- ❖ uses the device with improved access performance
- ❖ attempts to imitate movement and/or meaningful gestures
- ❖ indicates awareness of language through facial expression (such as recognition of a familiar person's name)
- ❖ uses consistent behaviors to interact with the software even though the content is now richer than it was at Stage One

Competency Goals

The primary focus at this Stage is the development of receptive vocabulary through computer access. Opportunities to become a communication-ready learner center around patient presentation of consistent language examples.

There are few measurable goals at this Stage, though the amount of time spent on task and consistent device use are good indications of successful exposure to language. In addition, effective behavioral cues such as body language and head orientation indicate whether or not the learner is actively involved and engaged.

Sample IEP Objectives

Written objectives for the learner at this Stage are again based primarily on observed behaviors. However, it is important to begin to consider the onset of deliberate communication efforts. We are focused on continuing to develop access device skills, but at the same time, we begin to extend the activity with opportunities to explore language-rich content. While the learner explores, observers monitor the content exposure and watch for further skill development in the use of the access device. If the device use remains reliable, then Stage Two skills are developing. If the behavior or device use revert to those demonstrated at Stage One, then the language exposure is ineffective.

Given *name of program* (accessible software with language stimulating targets), the learner will

- ❖ activate the device to continue presentation of content with fewer than 5 prompts per session
- ❖ demonstrate attention to the content by head tilt, utterance, or eye gaze
- ❖ indicate humor or interest by head tilt, utterance, or eye gaze
- ❖ indicate interest by extending the time he pays attention to the task per session
- ❖ indicate recognition of familiar content of customized program (with material from the learner's life)
- ❖ remain consistent with reliable use of access device

These objectives are measured by the management system provided by the software or by adult observation.

Stage Two References

- Bennett, Randy. 1988. *Reinventing Assessment: Speculations on the Future of Large Scale Assessment*. Policy Information Center of Educational Testing Service.
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- In CASE*
The Newsletter for the Council of Administrators of Special Education, a Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22191
- Journal of Special Education Leadership* (issue referenced: Volume 12, Number 2, Fall 1999)
Council of Administrators of Special Education, CASE, Inc., 615 16th Street NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104
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- TAM Connector* (issue referenced: Volume 12, Number 1, Fall 1999)
Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22191

An Overview of the Activities

About the Stage Two Activities

During Stage Two the learner builds a foundation for learning for the rest of his life. This Stage gives a learner the opportunity to take in the possibilities, to be exposed to the ways that words and concepts work, and to apply these words and concepts in his environment.

The Stage Two assessment activities are designed to promote exposure to words and rhyming patterns. Words that match the pictures on the screen are used in original rhymes that tell stories. The purpose is to expose the learner not only to words paired with pictures, but also to the rhyming patterns that are associated with the pictures and stories. This all begins by focusing his attention on words and letters.

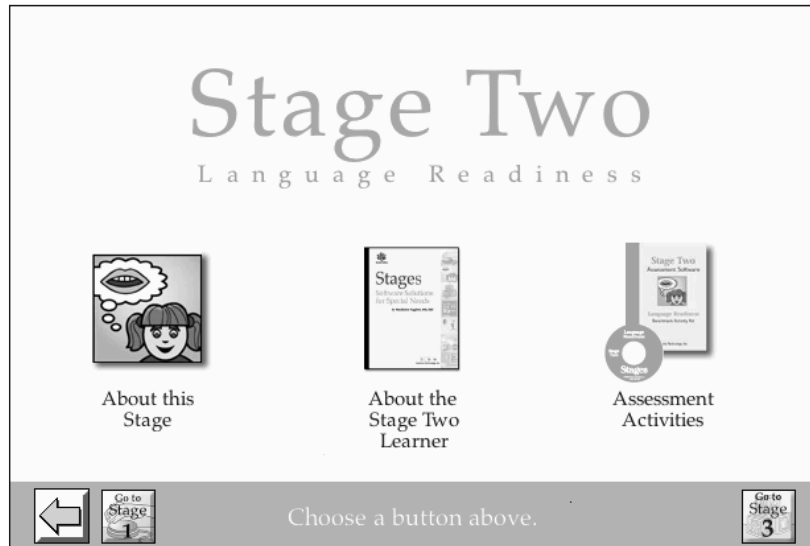
Stage Two activities present language to learners without requiring a response. The activities present concepts in many different ways to give learners several opportunities to become familiar with the words. They hear rhymes about words and they see a label for the target word, even though they are not yet ready to read the words.

For more information about the research supporting these activities, refer to the Stage Two chapter from the Stages book, reprinted here on pages 1–9.

Starting Stage Two

Before using the Stage Two activities with a learner, take a few minutes to become familiar with them yourself. When you are ready to use the activities with a learner, go to the section “Presenting the Activities” (page 27).

The main screen for Stage Two presents information about this Stage and leads you to the Stage Two Activities.



- Click **About this Stage** to learn more about Stage Two.
- Click **About the Stage Two Learner** to learn more about the learner at this Stage. This information is covered in more detail starting on page 8.
- Click on **Assessment Activities** to begin the activities.

Entering the Learner's Name

When you choose to start the Stage Two assessment activities, you will first be asked to enter the learner's name. This name will be printed on the report that is generated when the activity is completed.

Type the learner's name in the text box in the center of the screen, then click the **Continue** button or press <Return> (Macintosh) or <Enter> (Windows) to go on.

Setting Preferences

There are several preference settings that affect all the activities. The current settings are displayed at the bottom of the menu screens. Refer to page 22 for explanations of these settings and information on how to change them.



Choosing an Activity Type

There are three types of Stage Two assessment activities: Nouns, Verbs, and Attributes. Each of these activities exposes the learner to different types of words or word combinations.

The first words that learners understand are typically nouns. For example, the names of pets, foods, and family members are often initial vocabulary. Learners are exposed to new words as they are used in the context of their environment. The comprehension and application of these words become more understandable as parents use them in familiar situations. For example, a mother might identify each article of clothing as she is dressing her child every morning.

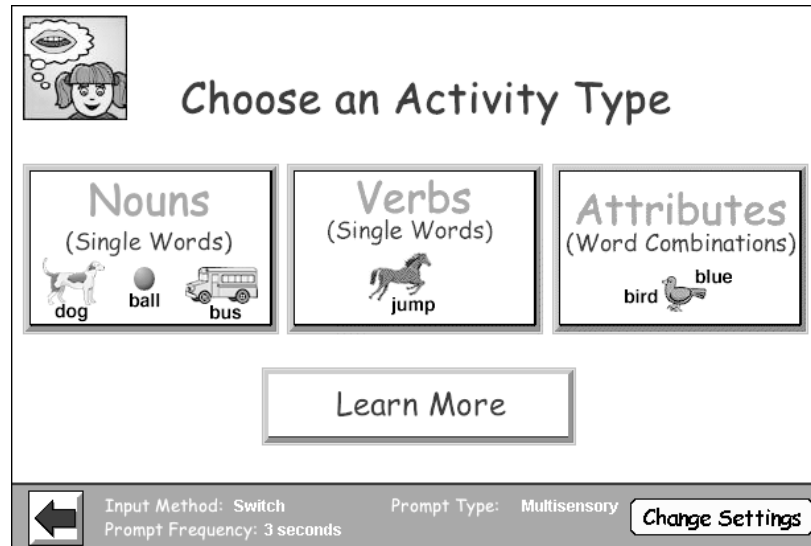
Next comes the understanding of action words, or verbs, such as “eat”, “play”, or “dress.” Again, use of these words in familiar settings helps the learner comprehend them. For example, as a mother dresses her child, she might say, “Put on your shoes” or “Pull off your hat” (even if she is performing the action herself).

Many words might have been selected for the content in the Stage Two assessment activities. In designing these activities, we elected to use the words identified on the Dolch Word List. This list organizes up to 75 percent of all words used in school books, library books, newspapers, and magazines into parts of speech categories and reading grade levels. While reading was certainly not our focus, we wanted to select words to use in Stage Two activities that the learner would need for academic success at a later Stage. Early exposure is a known advantage for learners with language and cognitive delays.

Based on research on language development, we first selected nouns, and then we selected verbs from the list that would help us create stories to accompany the exposure to the language and vocabulary. These words are listed on page 17.

The Attributes activities expand upon the words introduced in the Nouns activities. Primarily, we begin to expose the learner to word combinations. Learners are presented with descriptors or attributes related to the target word. This provides an introduction to the patterns and sounds associated with combining words. Learners at Stage Two are ready

to be exposed to descriptors such as color or size so they can begin to see how the language model works. They are not expected to understand the concepts of size and color until a later Stage; however, the activities are appropriate for receptive exposure to language at Stage Two.



Select a button to choose the activity type.

Nouns and Verbs: Single Words

These activities present words in isolation as an introduction to word meaning. The target noun is identified through text; recorded sound; and a representative photograph, drawing, or symbol. The verbs are illustrated through text and animations or movies that identify actions. The activities increase the learner's exposure to words and word identification skills.

Note: If QuickTime® is installed on your computer, you will see a video clip for some of the Verbs activities. If QuickTime is not installed, you will see a sequence of photographs that conveys the meaning of the verb.

Attributes: Word Combinations

These activities present words in combination with each other to expand on word meaning and to expose the learner to language use. The nouns that were previously presented in isolation are now combined with attributes or descriptions.

The attributes presented for each noun are size (“large” or “small”), color, and quantity (“These are cats”), showing multiple representations of the object. This helps the learner begin to generalize word meaning across levels of representation; that is, a drawing of a truck has the same meaning as a photograph of a truck.

Choosing a Level of Representation

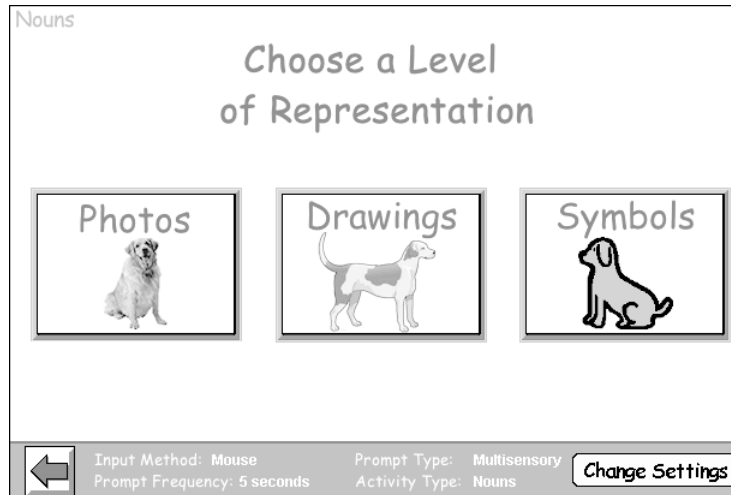
The next step is to choose a level of representation, or the way in which the objects are displayed.

At this language level, the goal is to help the learner understand the relationship of the word to the object. Repetitive descriptions and labeling of objects in the environment help to build core vocabulary. A typical activity at this language level is to line up an array of favorite items and then touch and label each object.

Pictures and photographs are symbols that make a direct connection to the object and convey the same meaning. They represent the real object and often look exactly the same as the real object. Pictures or photographs of familiar objects can help a learner generalize concepts. Present the learner with pictures that offer a change in attributes of the object that is depicted. For example, show pictures of different colored dogs, and label each one by saying the word “dog.”

Drawings are one step removed from the direct connection with a real object or photograph. They are useful in helping learners generalize attributes of objects and concepts. In addition, successfully understanding drawings helps a learner move toward symbolic understanding.

Symbols are the highest level of representation of a word, concept, or object. In order to understand symbols, the learner has to make the connection that one thing, like the symbol for “dog”, can stand for another thing, the actual animal. The learner begins to understand that the object exists because an image for it is stored in his memory. Even if the object is not physically present, he can understand its representation.



Select a button to choose the level of representation.



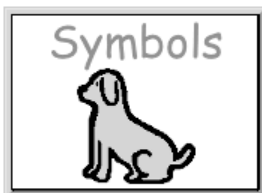
Photos

Select **Photos** to present language concepts using photographs (for Nouns and Attributes) or videos (for Verbs). This choice offers the learner the greatest level of realism. It is generally the easiest form for learners to recognize objects.



Drawings

Select **Drawings** to present the language concepts in the form of color drawings. This type of representation may be more difficult for the learner to understand initially, as the drawings are not as realistic as photographic images.



Symbols

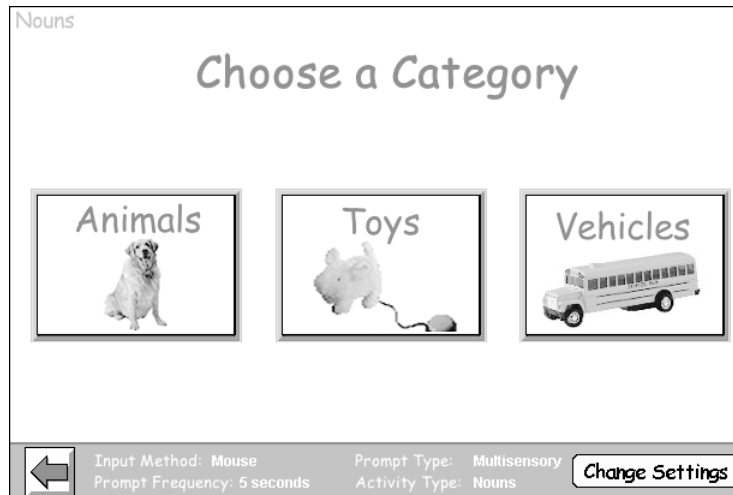
Select **Symbols** to present the language concepts in the form of communication symbols. The images are from the Picture Communication Symbols (PCS) libraries from Mayer-Johnson Company, used with permission. These symbols are commonly used by learners with special needs for communication. It may be important for the learner to become familiar with these symbols for use in the future.



Note: Use the **Back** button to return to the previous screen to make a different selection. (This button is not available if you choose to do the same type of activity after viewing the report, as changing the settings or choices at that point would invalidate the next report.)

Choosing a Category

After you select the level of representation, choose a category for the activities: **Animals**, **Toys**, or **Vehicles**.



Animals

The animals presented are familiar pets or farm animals. In the activities for the **Nouns** category, each animal appears by itself with a descriptive rhyme. After all five nouns are presented individually, a screen presents them together in a scene to show the category. In the activities for the **Verbs** category, the animal performs the action listed below in an animation or video.

cat	drink
dog	run
bird	sing
cow	eat
horse	jump

Toys

The toys were selected as being familiar objects in early childhood and special education classrooms. In the activities for the **Nouns** category, each toy appears by itself with a descriptive rhyme. After all five nouns are presented individually, a screen presents together in a scene to show the category. In the activities for the **Verbs** category, the toy performs the action listed below in an animation or video.

ball	play
block	fall
crayon	draw
switch toy	walk
bubbles	blow

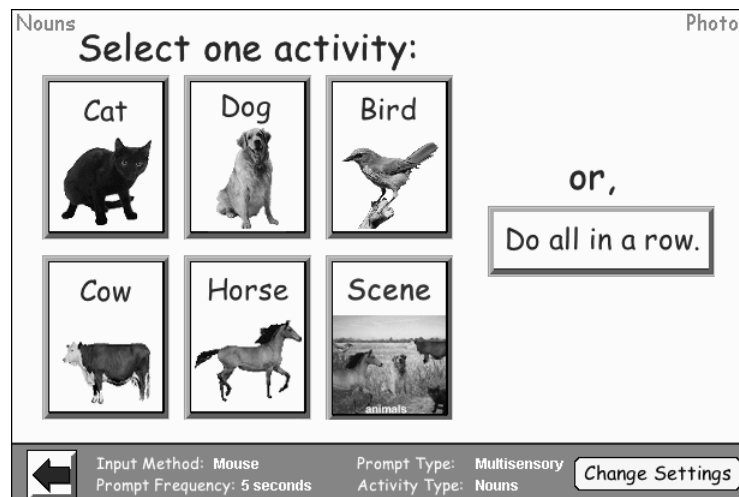
Vehicles

The vehicles presented are familiar forms of transportation. In the activities for the **Nouns** category, each vehicle appears by itself with a descriptive rhyme. After all five nouns are presented individually, a screen presents together in a scene to show the category. In the activities for the **Verbs** category, the vehicle performs the action listed below in an animation or video.

car	wash
bus	stop
boat	go
plane	fly
bike	ride

Choosing the Activity

Next, choose the specific activity you wish to use, or choose a sequence of all activities in the category.



Each of the Nouns and Verbs activities requires three activations of the input device. Each Attributes activity requires four activations. You can choose whether to do just one activity or all activities in a row, depending on the needs of the learner.

As the first activity begins, a prompt is presented. If you choose to do all activities in a row, an initial prompt is presented at the beginning of the series, but not before each individual activity within the set.

The learner presses the device to go through the activity. If the learner does not activate the device within the timeframe selected in the preference settings, the prompt recurs at that interval until the learner activates the device (unless you set the prompt frequency to “Never”).

Don't skip out of an activity that you want to graph later in Stages Report Wizard.



At the completion of an activity, or at the end of all activities, you can choose to see a report of the learner's session. The report automatically records aspects of the learner's performance. For information about the reports, see page 30.

To leave an activity before it is completed and go to the report, select the **arrow** button in the upper right corner of the screen. If you exit an activity in this way, you will not be able to include it in a graph using Stages Report Wizard.

Sample Activity Screens

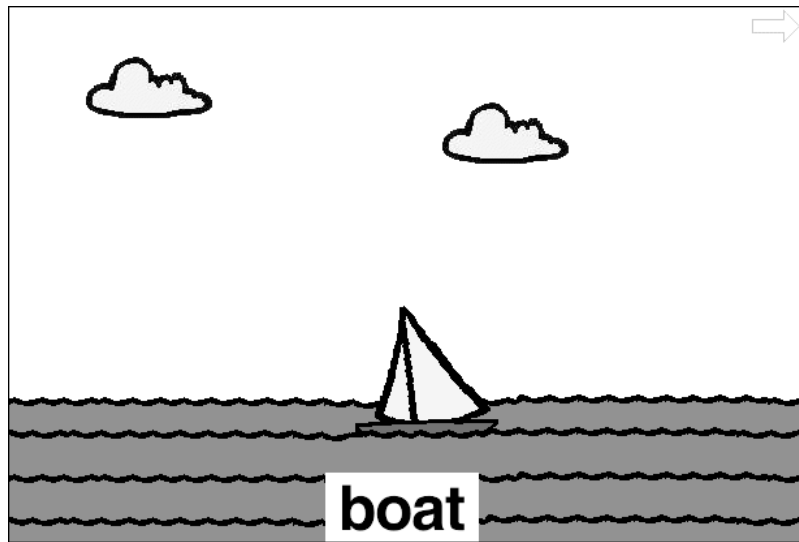
Nouns

Symbols

Vehicles

Boat

"This is a boat."



Verbs

Photo

Toys

Bubbles

"Blow, I blow bubbles!"



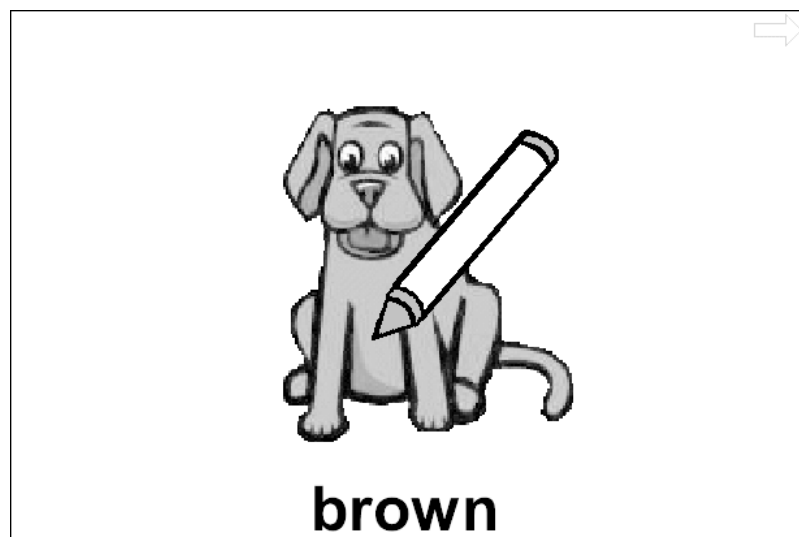
Attributes

Drawing

Animals

Dog

"This dog is brown."



Nouns

Photo

Animals

"These are animals."



Verbs

Symbol

Vehicles

Bike

"Ride, ride the bike!"



ride

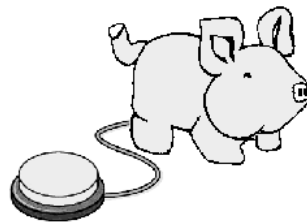
Attributes

Drawing

Toys

Switch Toy

"It is small."



small

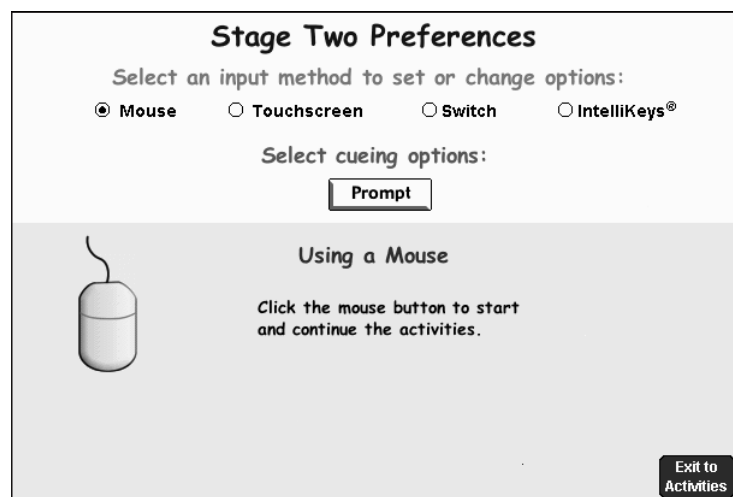
Setting and Changing Preferences

There are several preference settings you can change that affect all the activities. These preferences are also printed on the reports to serve as a record of the settings used during the session.

The current preference settings are displayed at the bottom of the screen. When you change settings, the information in this display is updated. The settings most recently saved are in effect when you start Stage Two.



To modify preferences, click the Change Settings button. The Preferences screen, shown below, will open.



Input Method:



Click a radio button to select the input method the learner will be using.

- Choose **Mouse** if you are using a device to point and click. This is the initial setting.
- Choose **Touchscreen** if you are using a built-in touchscreen or a touchscreen device attached to the monitor.

- Choose **Switch** if you are using any type of switch. Then select the type of switch you are using.



Select **Discover Switch** if you are using a Discover: Switch™ from Madentec Ltd.

☐ **Discover Switch**

The first time you use the Stage Two activities with a Discover Switch, you will be prompted to select a setup. This prompt occurs two times: once for the application that launches Stages and once for the actual Stages application. For both, choose the setup named “*Click Only Single Switch” (Macintosh) or “Click Only Single Switch.sus” (Windows). You will hear a beep when the Discover Switch activates. Pressing the Discover Switch too quickly may cause some switch presses not to be counted. If you hear a beep, the switch press is counted.



Select **IntelliKeys with switch attached** if you are using a switch plugged into IntelliKeys® (IntelliTools®, Inc.).

☐ **IntelliKeys with switch attached**

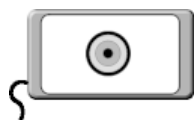
The Stages Click overlay, which sends a mouse-click, will automatically load. With Windows, you must turn on Num Lock and check the “Use MouseKeys” option in the Accessibility Options Control Panel.



Choose **Standard switch** if you are using any other type of switch. Make sure that the software for your switch is set to send a mouse-click.

☐ **Standard switch**

For information on using the Crick USB Switch Interface, refer to the Q&A section of this binder.



- Choose **IntelliKeys Keyboard** if you are using an IntelliKeys® keyboard (from IntelliTools®, Inc.). For more information about using IntelliKeys, refer to the Read Me file in the Overlays folder on the Stages CD.

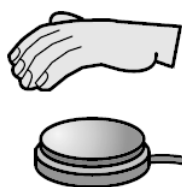
Here you will select whether you will use a direct select method (touching the keyboard) or a switch connected to IntelliKeys. This setting determines the prompt image (keyboard or switch) that is displayed and the input method that is printed in the report. The switch option is also available on the Switch settings screen.

☒ **IntelliKeys (direct select)**

☐ **IntelliKeys with switch attached**

Windows users must turn on Num Lock and check the “Use MouseKeys” option in the Accessibility Options Control Panel.

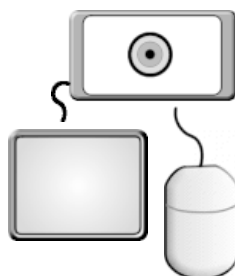
Type of prompt:



The prompt motivates or encourages the learner to activate the device to continue. The prompt image displayed matches the input method selected. Choose from three prompt types. The initial setting for the prompt type is **Multisensory**.

Visual Prompt

A visual prompt displays a hand pressing a switch in the center of the screen. There is no speech or sound accompanying a visual prompt.



Auditory Prompt

An auditory prompt has a spoken prompt, chosen randomly from a selection of encouraging phrases. There is no visual cue accompanying an auditory prompt.

Multisensory Prompt

This prompt combines visual and auditory cues.

Length of time between prompts:

You can choose to have a prompt occur every 3, 5, or 10 seconds, or have no prompt at all (a Prompt Frequency of “Never”). The initial setting is **5 seconds**.



When you have finished choosing preferences, click the Exit to Activities button at the bottom of the screen.

When you return to the activity choice screen, the settings shown at the bottom of the screen will reflect the changes you made.

Stage Two Menus (and exiting Stage Two)

Stage Two offers several menu options, which are available in the introductory, activity choice and report sections. You can use the keyboard equivalents listed below during the activities or at any other time.

Open Onscreen Keyboard: This menu item appears only when Stages is run on a Mercury or a MiniMerc computer (from Assistive Technology, Inc.). Choose this option when you need to type and an external keyboard is not available.

Start Over: Return to the opening screen. You will lose any data that has been collected for the learner.

Save: Save the current report information to a file (see the section beginning on page 33 for more information). This option is available only in the report sections.

Macintosh: ⌘S

Windows: Ctrl-S

Print: Print the current screen.

Macintosh: ⌘P

Windows: Ctrl-P

Choose a New Stage: (All-in-One Stages CD only)

Return to the main Stages menu. (You can also select the Exit Stage Two button at the end of the report.)

Macintosh: ⌘N

Windows: Ctrl-N

Quit: (Stage Two CD only)

Exit Stage Two. (You can also select the Exit Stage Two button at the end of the report.)

Macintosh: ⌘Q

Windows: Ctrl-Q

Presenting the Activities

Now that you have explored the activities on your own, you are ready to use them with a learner. It is important to use the assessment activities as intended and also to set up an appropriate environment for the learner. This section will help you and your learner get the most out of the assessment activities.

When and How to Use the Assessment Activities

Stages assessment activities are not designed for everyday practice. They are designed to help you measure progress within each Stage of development.

Stage Two activities help you observe the learner as he begins to acquire receptive vocabulary. With the activities, you can also explore various levels of representation and prompting styles to determine the combinations that elicit the most accurate and consistent learner behavior.

Stage Two skills are also called receptive language abilities. Testing for receptive language is difficult and largely a behavioral measure. By noting how long the learner spends on the activities and the number of prompts needed (both measured in the report), as well as watching for behavioral indications that the learner is independently exploring the activities, you can begin to draw conclusions about the language and cognitive development of the learner. Then, use the chart at the end of this section to identify appropriate software to use for related practice.

The Stages philosophy advocates a competency-based observation approach to assessment. Knowing exactly what a learner can do gives you the opportunity to design a custom curriculum perfectly tailored for that individual.

Use the accompanying Observation Form, along with performance records printed from within each activity, to provide the foundation for generating an informal competency-based assessment report. As the learner uses the activities, make observations on the forms that have been developed to address this Stage. Use the onscreen reports as well as written

notes you make on the Observation Form provided on page 41. Add your own category of observation on the form under “Additional Observations.”

Use these results to determine which Stage is appropriate and to select target skills toward which the learner will work to achieve. Then put the Stages activities away while the learner works in a practice environment of appropriate software from many manufacturers, which are recommended for that Stage.

After the learner has worked and practiced the target set of skills, return to the Stage Two assessment activities. Administer the activity again and compare your results. Is the learner making progress? Is the learner ready to move to another Stage?

Alternate working with Stage Two assessment activities for assessment and the third party practice software. Keep a portfolio of the observation results as well as any visual documentation available (photos or video). You can also keep any printouts that might be available from the practice software to document steps toward achievement.

Preparing the Environment

The environment for evaluating a learner’s functioning stage should be a familiar one. It should be the place where he typically works, lives, and plays. Unfamiliar environments are a curiosity—a learner will attend to the details around him that are different more than he will attend to the activity we want him to use. We want to avoid as many new variables as we can, helping the learner feel the comfort of the cognitively familiar environment. When the assessment activity is introduced, he can then concentrate on the new behavior or content rather than on environmental distracters.

Because the Stages philosophy is sensitive to all facets of the learning process, consider the physical comfort of the learner. Make sure that the assistive technology team gives input to the access device selection and proper positioning of the learner in the physical environment. Be sure the learner’s environment is optimal for success.

- Can the learner see the screen without glare or visual strain?
- Is the volume of sound from the computer adjusted to a comfortable level?
- Is the learner seated at the computer properly?
- Is the access device stable and in a position for consistently reliable use?
- Have the computer control panels been adjusted to maximize learner performance?
- When was the learner's last meal or snack? Does he have the proper fuel to work?
- Have necessary medications been administered properly?

In short, consider every aspect of the learner's physical comfort to be confident that a solid learning environment is available for optimum learner performance.

Adult Role in the Observation Process

It is important for you to continue to encourage the learner. He has learned a reliable process control in the learning environment, perhaps for the first time in his life. Taking risks can be a challenge for anyone, but especially for a learner who has limited experience with the opportunity to discover.

Your learner now understands that the movement you encourage actually controls the computer reliably. You might begin to see some experimenting with the access device early in Stage Two. This exemplifies a combination of behaviors. Some learners experiment because they are testing the environment for reliability, while others experiment more from a humorous perspective. It's fun to be silly once you know you are safe and reliably in control. Do whatever you can to orient the learner toward the Stage Two activities and help him make the connection that he is now in control of a content-rich learning environment!

Stage Two begins the foundation of language development. Learning is no longer just about process: it's beginning to be more about a rich and interesting content. This is the start of real learning opportunities for the learner, because access to a curriculum means that he can be fully engaged in both the content and the process.

Additional Verbal Prompts

Use verbal prompts both to cue and to reinforce the target behavior of access to the device and computer. Here are some sample verbal prompts for the adult to say that are appropriate for the assessment activities presented.

For Device Control

Press it!
You can do it!
Reach for your switch (or device).
Do it again!
Good for you!

For Nouns or Verbs Activities

Look at those (name of category)!
See the bus/dog/bubbles!
What fun toys!
Look at that sailboat go!

For Attributes Activities

See how big that horse is!
Look at all the cars!
See the yellow bus!
All those bikes are so small.

Viewing and Using the Reports

At the end of the activities, you can see a report of the learner's session. You can look for a learner's improvement over time by administering the activities again and reviewing the resulting reports.

The reports help you watch for improvement over time.

The report is automatically generated using information about the settings used and data gathered about the learner's performance. At the top of the report is information based on the general settings. The bottom portion of the report displays specific data that was gathered during the session.

Learner's Name:

This is the name that you entered when you started the activities. You can edit the name on this report now by clicking in the name text box and changing the name.

Input Method:

This is the access method that you selected in the Preference Settings screen. If you did not change this setting, the default value of Mouse is displayed.

Level of Representation:

This is the method you selected of representing the words on the screen: Photo, Drawing, or Symbol.

Prompt Frequency:

This is the frequency of prompt that you selected in the Preference Settings screen. If you did not change this setting, the default value of 5 seconds is displayed.

Prompt Type:


This is the type of prompt that you selected in the Preference Settings screen. If you did not change this setting, the default value of Multisensory is displayed.

Category:

This is the category of words you selected: Animals, Toys, or Vehicles.

Date and Time:

The date and time that the report was generated is displayed at the bottom of the screen. If this information is not correct, check the setting of your computer's clock.

Stage Two Report					
	Learner's Name: Chris		Prompt Frequency: 5 seconds		
	Input Method: Mouse		Prompt Type: Multisensory		
	Level of Representation: Photo		Category: Toys		
Nouns	Number of Required Presses	Number of Learner Presses	Number of Prompts	Time on Activity (Minutes:Seconds)	Did learner finish?
Ball					
Blocks					
Crayon					
Switch Toy					
Bubbles					
Toys					
Jan 30, 2002		12:41 PM		<input type="button" value="Print"/>	<input type="button" value="Save"/> <input type="button" value="Done"/>

Number of Required Presses:

This number indicates the minimum number of times the learner needs to activate the device in order to complete the activity. The Nouns and Verbs activities require 3 presses; the Attributes activities require 4 presses.

Number of Presses:

How many times did the learner press and release the device? Each press is counted, even if it occurs while an animation or sound is playing.

Number of Prompts:

How many prompts were presented during the activity? The initial prompt is not counted.

Time on Activity:

How long did the learner spend on the activity? The timer starts when the first screen for the activity opens and ends when the last screen of the activity closes. The duration is displayed in minutes and seconds. Example: 1:06 = 1 minute and 6 seconds.

Did Learner Finish:

Did the learner complete the activity? If the learner continued to press the device as many times as was necessary to finish the activity, the word "Yes" appears in this column. If the adult used the arrow at the upper right of the screen to cancel the activity, the word "No" is displayed.

Printing the Report

Click the Print button or choose Print from the File menu to print the report screen. This report looks different than a printout of the disk file, which is only text; however, the information is the same. You can also use the keyboard command for your computer:

Macintosh:	⌘P
Windows:	Ctrl-P

Saving the Report



To save the report, click the **Save** button. You can also use the keyboard command for your computer.

Macintosh: ⌘P

Windows: Ctrl-P

A dialog box appears with a file name that describes the content of the report. You can change the name of the report if you prefer. On a Windows computer, it is important to keep the “.txt” extension at the end of the file name so that it will be recognized as a WordPad document. If a file with the same name already exists in the folder, you can either replace it with the contents of the new file or choose a different file name.

***STAGES REPORT
WIZARD
automatically
graphs the data
saved in your
reports.***

The first time during each session that you save a report, a default file location is used. On a Windows computer, this location is usually the “C:\My Documents” folder. If that folder does not exist, the Desktop is used instead. On the Macintosh, this location is usually the main folder of the hard drive. (If the location is the CD and not the hard drive, refer to the Technical Q&A section of this binder for instructions on how to change this.)

You can browse to select a different folder for your reports and even create a new folder. Future reports that you save during the same session will use the save location you select. If you are using Stages Report Wizard, save all the learner’s reports to his or her folder in the My Stages Reports folder.

For information on importing the saved report files into other applications, refer to the Technical Q&A section of this binder.

Finishing the Report

Summary Report

If you are viewing the report information for a single activity, click the **Summary Report** button to view all the data for activities done with the current settings. (Data is erased for choices that allow you to modify the activity or preferences so that the reports always present data that accurately matches the settings that are displayed.)

Done

After viewing and printing the report, click the **Done** button at the bottom of the screen. You can then:

- do more activities of the same type (keep current data);
- change to a different learner (erase current data);
- change to a different activity or change settings (erase current data);
- quit the program.

Observing the Learner

This section will help you understand how to observe a learner and use the information gained from these observations.

Making Observations

Generally, the learner should not see you recording his performance. It's ideal if another adult who is commonly in the learning environment can record the observations. One adult can encourage the learner and the other can record behaviors during the assessment activity without being noticed by the learner.

When two adults in the same environment observe the same exact behaviors, that then validates the accuracy of the data that is collected during the session. Finally, an ideal environment would include an unobtrusive video or still camera. Documenting a learner's performance allows the IEP team to observe results as part of the reporting and assessment process.

Is the learner properly positioned in the learning environment? Is the learner comfortable? Only if you are confident that the environmental conditions are conducive for evaluation can the results be considered.

Interpreting Observation Results and Report Data

Use the Observation Form to record learner behavior during the activities. Watch for the behaviors identified on the forms; add your own under "Additional Observations."

Watch for body language as a communication signal from the learner. Does the learner appear interested in the software? There are many behaviors that indicate purposeful listening. These include attention to the sound source, smiles, giggles, eye gaze, anticipatory body language such as a lean or head tilt, and deliberate movement to activate the access device. A more subtle behavior might be getting upset when an activity ends.

Interpreting Access Data

Is the learner working for a longer time than he did before? Is there body language that makes you believe that the learner is engaged in the activity? For example, does he make eye contact and smile when a familiar object appears? Is he orienting his head toward the screen? Is there a joyful utterance? These are indications that the learner is involved in the work in a constructive way, paying attention and gaining benefit from the exposure to language.

Consider the learner's interactions with the content presented. The learner has the opportunity to interact with names of objects and actions, typical beginning content for an early receptive language experience. However, the Stage Two activities also present important concepts to the learner as well—concepts such as adjectives, sounds associated with objects, categories for objects, and so forth.

Because the content of the Stage Two assessment activity is designed to be a bit more complex than the typical practice environment, on one extreme, watch for signs that the learner might be overwhelmed by too much stimulus language. This might be indicated by a lack of eye contact, leaning or turning the head away from the screen. On the other extreme, watch for signs that the learner is encouraged to initiate more exploration. More purposeful use of the device and staying on task without prompting tell us that there's real progress for the Stage Two learner. This indicates an onset of interest in those words and concepts in new ways for this learner. If such deliberate exploration, enthusiastic body language, or an increase in humorous reactions to the software is evident, the learner is probably ready to be considered for Stage Three experiences.

Interpreting Prompt Data

As we already know, the prompt is the feature in the software that encourages the learner to work independently. For success at Stage Two, we are looking for indications that the learner is working independently, and requires fewer prompts for staying on task or completing a task. Quite simply, compare the results from Stage One to Stage Two in this area, if Stage One assessment activities were used. You are looking for two different learner performance results.

First, did one approach lead to better performance? Was it the visual prompt that kept the learner on task? Or was the auditory or multisensory environment more effective? Does the learner respond to one type of prompt more consistently than others? Make note of this interpretation because you will use it in selecting which type of prompt to look for when choosing the practice software.

Second, as suggested, examine the actual number of prompts needed for the learner to complete the task. If you administered the Stage One assessment, were there fewer or at least the same number of prompts needed than for Stage One? If so, the learner might be ready for a Stage Three learning experience. If not, continue to practice in Stage Two software and administer the Stage Two assessment activity again at a later time. If you did not administer the Stage One assessment, you need to watch for indications that the learner is connected with the experience.

Look for the body language cues already discussed. Does the learner glance away from the computer and require prompts to bring his attention back, or does the learner remain focused on the activity? When the inventory is unfamiliar when first administered, prompting is likely to be required every time. After a while, does the learner begin to anticipate the prompts and activate the software without being reminded? Is there a display of humor or enjoyment interpreted from the learner's behavior when interacting with the activities? These are indicators that the learner is attending to the software activity, and benefiting because he understands what is happening on the screen.

Interpreting Level of Representation Data

Does the learner seem to prefer or better understand real pictures, drawn objects or representative symbols? Note that Stage Two assessment activities offer the opportunity for the learner to interact with all three approaches to visual representations of language.

The goal is for the learner to generalize across all three representations for a concept. Does the learner understand that the real photograph of a dog is the same concept as the drawn picture of a dog and also the representative symbol for dog? Those representations do not look the same, yet they stand for the same concept. During Stage Two we are working toward this understanding. We already know that our learner is delayed. If he is eventually going to be a communication symbol user, now is the time to teach the learner that the symbol conveys meaning just as the spoken word does, and that pictures also can represent the same concept.

When administering the Stage Two assessment activities, do not have real objects around to distract the learner. However, if the learner seems to make a connection from something presented on the screen to something in the environment, make note of this on your Observation Sheet. For example, a learner might see a photograph of blocks and then look toward the block area in the classroom. This would indicate that the learner is indeed making connections and is ready for Stage Three experiences.

You will need to consider the body language that's described above when taking this into account. Review the list of Observable Characteristics for the Stage Two learner (page 8) and then watch for indications that these behaviors are occurring.

Moving to Stage Three

If you administered the Stage One assessment activities, and the computer-generated report for Stage Two indicates similar or better performance data than for Stage One, you might consider moving the learner toward Stage Three. This means that the learner has remained on task for a longer time, requires fewer prompts, is using his device effectively, and completes activities reliably. If this is happening, then the learner is being exposed to language in a very deliberate way.

If you did not administer the Stage One assessment activity, compare the results from the Stage Two activities administered more than once. It is recommended that after administering the Stage Two assessments, you engage the learner in a familiar alternative activity. Be sure that the learner is not too tired. If so, take a break. Then administer the Stage Two assessment again. Compare the results. Was the learner performance data better the second time? If so, you can interpret this as an indication that the learner is benefiting from Stage Two activities and might be ready to try some Stage Three experiences.

As previously mentioned, there is really no way to test for receptive language. Once you ask a learner to indicate his understanding of a word or concept, that's a Stage Three activity. Therefore, actually testing for Stage Two abilities has to still be a behavioral measure. If the learner is remaining on task at the same level of performance effectiveness, however, the activity has changed from light content to a language rich experience, and the learner is having a more meaningful interaction. In order to know if the interactions are resulting in learning, the experiences must shift toward Stage Three.

Observation Form—Stage Two

Learner's Name _____

Recorder's Name _____

Other Observer's Name _____

Date _____

Setting for Observation _____

Using informal observation techniques, record the following information so that you can accurately interpret learner performance.

Assessment Environment:

View the screen on the same eye level as the learner. Is there a glare on the screen?

_____ Yes _____ No

(If so, adjust window blinds, reposition the computer and learner's seat, or construct a shade for the monitor to eliminate the glare.)

Describe the setting:

_____ learner's regular setting _____ familiar but not everyday _____ unfamiliar

Position the learner is facing:

_____ toward the center of the room

_____ away from the center of the room

Are there any distracting objects nearby? _____ Yes _____ No

Is the learner properly positioned? _____ Yes _____ No

Should these or any other factors be considered when interpreting results?

Copy these pages before recording your observations.

(This form is also provided as a PDF on the Stages CD.)

(over)

1. Describe the learner's body language during the assessment activity.
Check what you observe.

- ☐ head tilt or orientation toward the screen
- ☐ leaning toward the screen
- ☐ eye gaze toward the screen
- ☐ eye gaze toward an adult
- ☐ smile
- ☐ facial expression indicating familiarity
- ☐ utterances

Write what you observe:

other personal, familiar behavior _____

gesture or movement (attempt to) _____

2. Did the learner activate the access device without a prompt from you?

_____ Yes _____ No If Yes, type of prompt: _____

3. Did the learner seem to initiate exploration of the content independently?

_____ Yes _____ No

What behaviors are you interpreting in order to draw a conclusion?

4. Did the learner understand that he/she was working to continue a sequence, or to complete a goal?

_____ Yes _____ No

5. What do you think motivated the learner to stay involved and why?

6. Did the learner seem to prefer:

- ☐ real pictures (photographs)
- ☐ drawn objects
- ☐ representative symbols

What behaviors are you interpreting in order to draw a conclusion?

7. Did the learner's behavior change during the assessment (e.g., did the learner begin to fidget, wiggle in the seat, make few responses, stop responding)?
_____ Yes _____ No

If so, please describe what happened.

When did the change happen?

Why do you think the behavior changed?

8. Are there any environmental issues that might affect the data? For example, were there any objects or sounds that might have distracted the learner or enhanced the assessment session?

9. Additional Observations:

[illegible]

page 4

Practice Software for Stage Two

General Software Considerations

A Stage Two learner is not yet making choices. Make sure that software settings are appropriate.

It is important to note that many software programs suggested can be recommended at more than one Stage. These programs provide varied content and malleable preference settings that allow for custom presentations. Refer to the chart pages that follow to identify keystrokes for changing settings.

By making adjustments to such areas as input option or specific content for a picture identification activity, you can use the same software program successfully at several Stages. Refer to the “Also appropriate at:” category in the Software Comparison Chart that follows.

In addition, you can tailor programs for individual learners. For example, you may turn off animation for learners who might have a startle reaction to that event on the screen. Or you might turn on auditory prompting for learners who have visual challenges. Use every possible setting to best support and facilitate the learning process and customize the content of the activity.

Keep in mind that Stage Two software may be able to be used recreationally for a learner who is functioning or developing skills at a higher Stage. The design of the software and its content, graphics, and sound would be familiar or easy to grasp. This comfortable environment could serve as fun and relaxing play or provide a practice arena.

Individual software titles are recommended not because they are the most dynamic or up-to-date, but because they are effective and valuable resources in helping our target learners accomplish their developmental goals. In fact, even some programs that have been available for several years and may appear to be outdated are included. Oftentimes recycled or older computer equipment is what’s most available for our target learners. As long as the software offers valuable activities and still may be found in schools or homes as of the publication date of this document, it remains on the list.

Exploring Software Settings

Software that is appropriate for Stage Two is available from many developers. These recommended programs are included in the feature Comparison Chart that follows. As you look to identify software that is appropriate for an individual learner, keep the following in mind.

Input modes

Software appropriate for use at Stage Two expects only a click or some other selection key, such as a space bar. A menu of input device options should be available in the software, as well as a way to indicate which selection key is active. This way the software knows whether to watch for a click or selection key, and what type of device is making the selection.

While not all software accommodates this type of fine-tuning, sometimes the access device itself will have preference settings, which you can adjust to create the same effect for the learner's access environment. Work with the assistive technology team or specialist to determine the best way to configure the environment for success.

Adjusting settings for various types of learners

Explore settings that fit the learner's preferences and needs, but don't feel you need to try every available setting, as the learner may become confused. At Stage Two, the computer environment must be consistent or the learner won't establish the connection between his behavior and the results that happen on the screen.

In all software, look to see if there is an option to add your own images and sounds. At Stage Two, we want images and sounds that are both familiar and comfortable for the learner. Since only some software programs permit such customizing, finding as many other ways to customize the interaction is important.

How to Use the Chart

The chart on the following pages compares recommended software for Stage Two. Each title offers specific features that may be critical to a learner's success. Use this chart to help determine which software might be most beneficial for your particular learners. The following terms are used in the chart.

Title	The name of the software program.
Publisher	The name of the company that makes or sells the software.
Platform	<p>The types of computers that can run the software.</p> <p><i>Mac:</i> Macintosh® computers</p> <p><i>Win:</i> PC computers running the Windows® operating system</p> <p><i>DOS:</i> PC computers running the DOS operating system (older models)</p> <p>Software is available on CD-ROM, unless otherwise noted.</p> <p><i>Mac/Win:</i> This software is available for both platforms on the same CD.</p> <p><i>Mac, Win:</i> This software is available for both platforms, but may be packaged separately.</p>
Access Options	<p>The types of input methods that the program supports.</p> <p><i>Keyboard:</i> You can use a standard or alternative keyboard such as IntelliKeys® or an accessible onscreen keyboard.</p> <p><i>Mouse:</i> You can use a standard mouse or mouse emulator, which you can use to point and click.</p> <p><i>Touchscreen:</i> You can use a touchscreen, either built into the computer or attached to a monitor.</p> <p><i>IntelliKeys:</i> This program is set up to use an IntelliKeys® alternative keyboard from IntelliTools, Inc.</p> <p><i>Switch:</i> You can use a switch with this program.</p> <p><i>Other:</i> Any other methods supported by the software.</p>
Prompt Options	<p>The way in which the learner is encouraged to use the device.</p> <p><i>Auditory:</i> Speech or a sound is used as a prompt.</p> <p><i>Visual:</i> A silent animation or graphic is used as a prompt.</p> <p><i>Multisensory:</i> Sound and animation are used as a prompt.</p>

Level of Representation	<p>The way in which objects are presented to the learner.</p> <p><i>Photo:</i> Realistic, photographic images are used.</p> <p><i>Drawing:</i> Drawings are used.</p> <p><i>Symbol:</i> Communication symbols are used.</p>
Language Content	<p>The form in which language is presented to the learner.</p> <p><i>Single words:</i> Words are presented singly, in isolation.</p> <p><i>Word combinations:</i> More than one word or concept is presented at a time.</p>
Feedback Type	<p>The event that occurs when the learner uses the device.</p> <p><i>Auditory:</i> Sound plays or spoken text occurs.</p> <p><i>Visual:</i> An animation or graphical image is displayed.</p> <p><i>Multisensory:</i> Both sound and animation are played.</p>
Voice Options	<p>The way in which speech is presented to the learner and the available voices.</p> <p><i>Digitized:</i> Recordings of human voices are used.</p> <p><i>Synthesized:</i> Computer-generated voices are used.</p>
Graphics	<p>The ages for which the graphics presented are appropriate.</p> <p>“Generic” indicates that the graphics are appropriate for both adults and children.</p>
Record Keeping	<p>The data that is collected by the software to keep track of the learner’s actions while using the program. “Time” refers to the amount of time spent on the activity.</p>
To change settings:	How to get to the screen where you can change settings.
To exit activity:	How to stop the current activity and/or exit the program.
Other Settings and Features	Additional capabilities of each program are included here.
Also appropriate at:	<p>Other Stages at which this title may be appropriate are listed. You may need to change settings within the software to make it function suitably for learners at these other Stages. Using software at more than one Stage can help reinforce prior learning, introduce new concepts in a familiar environment, and extend the useful life of software in your collection.</p> <p>The last page of the chart lists titles in other Stages that may also be appropriate at Stage Two.</p>

Stage Two Software Comparison Chart

Title	A Trip to the Zoo	Best of KidTECH	Cause & Effect Cinema	Circletime Tales® Deluxe
Publisher	Marblesoft	SoftTouch, Inc.	Judy Lynn Software, Inc.	Don Johnston, Inc.
Platform	Mac	Mac or Win diskette	DOS / Win CD or diskette	Mac / Win
Access Options				
Keyboard	√		√	√
Mouse	√	√	√	√
Touchscreen	√	√		√
IntelliKeys®	√ (includes overlays)	√		√
Switch	√ (single or multiple)	√	√ (set to mouse click)	√ with scanning (rate option)
Other	Ke:nx™ On:Board			Discover:Switch®, Ke:nx
Prompt Options				
Auditory		√		
Visual	√	√		
Multisensory		√	√	√
Level of Representation				
Photo	√		√	
Drawing	√	√		√
Symbol				
Language Content				
Single words				
Word Combinations	√	√		√ nursery rhymes
Feedback Type				
Auditory	√ digital sound effects			
Visual	√ animation and video			
Multisensory	√	√	√	√
Voice Options				
Digitized	children's voices	male		female child and adult
Synthesized				
Graphics	Generic	Child	Generic; 90 video clips	Child
Record Keeping				
To change settings	setup options: onscreen menu	<ctrl> key	onscreen menu bar	⌘T (<ctrl> + T) to access options
To exit activity:	click on bus icon			#3 to quit story
Other Settings and Features	Learner explores 5 areas of a city zoo; This can be self-paced.	Random scanning selects from 6 activities and then plays a song.	Switch: timed and latching modes. 10 categories to choose from. Can choose play sequence, screen size, and auditory prompt timing.	Learner can highlight phrases, press to choose or to turn page only. Software comes with a binder of learning materials. English/Spanish settings.
Also appropriate at:		Stage 3, for purposeful scanning	Stage 1	Stage 3, Stage 4

Stage Two Software Comparison Chart

Title	Concepts On the Move: Advanced Preacademics	Concepts On the Move: Basic Preacademics	Creature Magic	Early Childhood Fun: Arump
Publisher	SoftTouch, Inc.	SoftTouch, Inc.	Laureate Learning Systems™	Creative Communicating
Platform	Mac / Win	Mac / Win	Mac / Win	Mac / Win
Access Options				
Keyboard				✓
Mouse	✓	✓	✓	✓
Touchscreen	✓	✓	✓	✓
IntelliKeys®	✓ (includes overlays)	✓ (includes overlays)	✓	✓ (includes overlays)
Switch	✓ 1 or 2, auto or step, turn-taking	✓ 1 or 2, auto or step, turn-taking		✓
Other				
Prompt Options				
Auditory	✓	✓		
Visual	✓	✓		✓
Multisensory	✓	✓	✓	
Level of Representation				
Photo	✓	✓		
Drawing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Symbol				
Language Content				
Single words				
Word Combinations	Illustrates concepts: occupations, functions, goes with, prepositions, categories	Illustrates concepts: colors, shapes, big/little, opposites, same as.	✓	traditional rhyme
Feedback Type				
Auditory	✓	✓	✓	
Visual	✓	✓	✓	
Multisensory	✓ animations, music	✓ animations, music	✓	✓
Voice Options				
Digitized	male, female	male, female	male	child
Synthesized				
Graphics	Generic	Generic	Generic	Child
Record Keeping	Time on task, access, scan rate, choices, preferences	Time on task, access, scan rate, choices, preferences	User Log with time on task, number of prompts.	
To change settings	<ctrl> key, m-hide/show menus	<ctrl> key, m-hide/show menus		
To exit activity:	esc to quit	esc to quit	<esc> key	
Other Settings and Features	choice of cursor, customizable vocabulary, press and release/hold, scan rate, one press/multiple press to play, Additional overlay CD available, teaching hints, planning sheets. Print, Play & Learn CD available with off-computer activities	choice of cursor, customizable vocabulary, press and release/hold, scan rate, one press/multiple press to play, Additional overlay CD available, teaching hints, planning sheets. Print, Play & Learn CD available with off-computer activities	Adjustable sound volume and response time.	Traditional rhymes. Software includes frog puppet template.
Also appropriate at:	Stage 3 (Choice of concepts presented), Stage 4 (Prepositions), Stage 6 (Occupations, Functions)	Stage 3 (Choice of concepts presented), Stage 4 (Shapes, Colors, Big/Little)		Stage 3, Stage 4

Stage Two Software Comparison Chart

Title	Early Childhood Fun: Single Switch Songs	Everybody Has Feet	IntelliPics Studio III: Coloring Ant Colony	IntelliPics Studio III: Coloring Book Activity
Publisher	Creative Communicating	Simtech Publications	IntelliTools, Inc.	IntelliTools, Inc.
Platform	Mac / Win	Mac	Win, Mac	Win, Mac
Access Options				
Keyboard	✓		✓	✓
Mouse	✓	✓	✓	✓
Touchscreen	✓	✓	✓	✓
IntelliKeys®	✓ (includes overlays)	✓ (includes overlays)	✓ (overlays available)	✓ (overlays available)
Switch	✓	✓ auto or step	✓	✓
Other		scan rate option		
Prompt Options				
Auditory			✓	✓
Visual		✓ (initial only)		
Multisensory	✓			
Level of Representation				
Photo				
Drawing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Symbol		✓ (optional)		
Language Content				
Single words				
Word Combinations	8 song starters	✓	✓	✓
Feedback Type	Feedback provided by adult			
Auditory	✓	✓		
Visual	✓	✓		
Multisensory	✓	✓		
Voice Options				
Digitized	female	child	✓	✓
Synthesized				
Graphics	Child	Child	child	child
Record Keeping			All records and activities can be saved or printed	All records and activities can be saved or printed
To change settings		main menu	<ctrl + M> - menu access, <ctrl + shift + O> - user preferences	<ctrl + M> - menu access, <ctrl + shift + O> - user preferences
To exit activity:		<ctrl> key	<ctrl> + W	<ctrl> + W
Other Settings and Features	8 song starters. Printable Boardmaker symbols on songbook storyboards, to facilitate off-computer choice making.	Momentary (Direct) or Timed Switch modes; progress through story/song sequentially or explore its elements; explore word-by-word or line-by-line	IntelliTools Studio Classroom Suite. Uses animation when picture is completed. Mouse click colors diagram.	IntelliTools Studio Classroom Suite.
Also appropriate at:	Stage 1, Stage 3, Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 1, Stage 3	Stage 3, 4

Stage Two Software Comparison Chart

Title	IntelliPics Studio III: Coloring Book Template	IntelliPics Studio III: Coloring Diagrams Template	Introduction to Scanning	Point to Pictures
Publisher	IntelliTools, Inc.	IntelliTools, Inc.	Judy Lynn Software, Inc.	RJ Cooper & Assoc.
Platform	Win, Mac	Win, Mac	DOS / Win CD or diskette	Mac, Win
Access Options				
Keyboard	✓	✓	✓ use space bar	✓
Mouse	✓	✓	✓	✓
Touchscreen	✓	✓	✓	✓
IntelliKeys®	✓ (overlays available)	✓ (overlays available)	✓	✓ (includes overlays)
Switch	✓	✓		
Other				
Prompt Options				
Auditory	✓	✓	✓	✓
Visual			✓	✓
Multisensory			✓	✓
Level of Representation				
Photo				✓
Drawing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Symbol				✓
Language Content				
Single words				
Word Combinations	✓	✓		
Feedback Type				
Auditory			✓	
Visual			✓	
Multisensory			✓	✓
Voice Options				
Digitized	✓	✓	female	male and custom
Synthesized	✓			
Graphics	child	child	Generic	Generic
Record Keeping	All records and activities can be saved or printed	All records and activities can be saved or printed		Number of turns, % correct responses.
To change settings	<ctrl + M> - menu access, <ctrl + shift + O> - user preferences	<ctrl + M> - menu access, <ctrl + shift + O> - user preferences	main menu	<ctrl>-Q
To exit activity:	<ctrl> + W	<ctrl> + W	<esc> key	<ctrl>-Q
Other Settings and Features	IntelliTools Studio Classroom Suite.	IntelliTools Studio Classroom Suite. Create simple coloring activities that feature science diagrams. Mouse click colors diagram.	When learner activates device, highlighted object is added to picture. 15 activities. Can turn auditory scanning (spoken names) on/off.	Wait option coaches learner when to click. You can record your own voice, add your own graphics. Prompts in sign language (animated character signs prompt).
Also appropriate at:	Stage 3, 4	Stage 1, Stage 3, Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 3

Stage Two Software Comparison Chart

Title	Puzzle Power™, Puzzle Power Zoo & School Days	Scan It/Switch It	SoftTouch Classics 1: Five Frogs Plus	SoftTouch Classics 2: Away We Ride Plus
Publisher	SoftTouch, Inc.	UCLA Intervention Program	SoftTouch, Inc.	SoftTouch, Inc.
Platform	Mac / Win	Mac diskette	Mac / Win	Mac / Win
Access Options				
Keyboard	✓			
Mouse	✓	✓	✓	✓
Touchscreen	✓	✓	✓	✓
IntelliKeys®	✓ (includes overlays)	✓	✓ (includes overlays)	✓ (includes overlays)
Switch	✓ auto (rate option)	✓	✓ 1 or 2, auto or step	✓ 1 or 2, auto or step
Other				
Prompt Options	Visual			
Auditory		✓	✓	✓
Visual	✓	✓	✓	✓
Multisensory		✓	✓	✓
Level of Representation				
Photo	✓			
Drawing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Symbol				
Language Content				
Single words				
Word Combinations	✓	✓	✓	✓
Feedback Type	Self correcting			
Auditory				
Visual			✓	✓
Multisensory	✓	✓	✓	✓
Voice Options				
Digitized	male	female	male, female	male, female
Synthesized				
Graphics	Generic	Child-oriented	child, teen-oriented	child, teen-oriented
Record Keeping		Number of turns and errors, average number of errors per turn. .	name, date, access, switch use, rate, time total number of choices	name, date, access, switch use, rate, time total number of choices
To change settings	piece placement option menu, access menu		ctrl key	ctrl key
To exit activity:	<ctrl> key	<esc> key	esc to quit	esc to quit
Other Settings and Features	Puzzle placement options: Automatic Placement (for Stage Two); Magnet Mouse, Click and Drag, and Match Scan (for higher Stages).	Available vertical scan option.	choice of cursor, customizable vocabulary, press and release/hold, teaching hints	choice of cursor, customizable vocabulary, press and release/hold, teaching hints
Also appropriate at:	Stage 3, Stage 4	Stage 3	Stage 3 (scanning choices) Stage 4 (number concepts)	Stage 3

Stage Two Software Comparison Chart

Title	SoftTouch Favorites	Songs I Sing at Preschool	Switch Basics	Teach Me Functional Foods	Teach Me to Talk
Publisher	SoftTouch, Inc.	SoftTouch, Inc.	SoftTouch, Inc.	SoftTouch, Inc.	SoftTouch, Inc.
Platform	Mac / Win	Mac / Win	Mac, Win	Mac / Win	Mac / Win
Access Options					
Keyboard		√ (1 and 2 keys)			
Mouse	√	√	√	√	√
Touchscreen	√	√	√	√	√
IntelliKeys®	√ (includes overlays)	√ (includes overlays)	√ (includes overlays)	√ (includes overlays)	√ (includes overlays)
Switch	√	√ 1 or 2, auto or step, turn-taking		√ 1 or 2, auto or step	√
Other					
Prompt Options					
Auditory		√		√	
Visual	√	√	√	√	√
Multisensory	√	√	√	√	√
Level of Representation					
Photo		√	√	√	√
Drawing	√	√	√	√	
Symbol				√	√
Language Content					
Single words				√	
Word Combinations	√	Popular children's songs.	√		√
Feedback Type					
Auditory		√		√ optional music	
Visual		√		√	
Multisensory	√	√ animations, music		√	
Voice Options					
Digitized	male, female	male, female, child	male, female, child	male, female	male, female
Synthesized					
Graphics	Child, Teen	Child	Generic	child, teen-oriented	Generic/morphing (images morph from photos to drawings to symbols)
Record Keeping				Yes	
To change settings	T for scanning preferences	⌘A (<ctrl>+A) for access. <ctrl>+M to hide/show menus	S for scan rate	ctrl key	T for preferences
To exit activity:	<ctrl> key	<ctrl> key esc to quit	<ctrl> key	esc key to quit, "m" to show menus	<ctrl> key
Other Settings and Features		Choose: 1 target for Stage 2, more targets for other Stages. Choice of cursor, customizable vocabulary, press and release/hold, scan rate, one press/multiple press to play. Additional overlay CD available, teaching hints, planning sheets.	Student control option available. Teacher hints, choice of music available.	can customize number and kind of choices presented, teaching hints, academic activity grid	Includes teaching hints.
Also appropriate at:	Stage 3	Stage 3 (Choice of concepts presented), Stage 4	Stage 1: Aquarium, Tiger, Step Forward, Stage 3: Beauty Parlor, Barber Shop, Puzzles	Stage 3 (purposeful scanning)	Stage 3

Stage Two Software Comparison Chart

Title	The Rodeo	Turn-Talking	UKanDu, Switches, Tool Series: Eensy & Friends, Forgetful & Friends, Humpty Dumpty & Friends
Publisher	SoftTouch, Inc.	RJ Cooper & Assoc.	Don Johnston, Inc.
Platform	Mac / Win	Mac, Win	Mac / Win
Access Options			
Keyboard			
Mouse	✓	✓	✓
Touchscreen	✓		✓
IntelliKeys®	✓ (includes overlays)	✓	✓
Switch	✓		
Other			
Prompt Options			
Auditory		✓	
Visual	✓	✓	✓
Multisensory	✓		
Level of Representation			
Photo		✓	
Drawing	✓	✓	✓
Symbol			
Language Content			
Single words			
Word Combinations	✓	✓	✓
Feedback Type			
Auditory		✓	
Visual		✓	
Multisensory		✓	✓
Voice Options		can record own voice	
Digitized	male, female	male	child
Synthesized		unspecified gender/age	
Graphics	Teen	Generic	Child
Record Keeping		Records number of turns, response time, incorrect switch use.	
To change settings		<ctrl>-Q	T for options
To exit activity:	<ctrl> key	<ctrl>-Q	0 (zero) or M for menu
Other Settings and Features		Teacher can change/add names, edit content and add photos.	
Also appropriate at:		Stage 3, Stage 4	Stage 1, Stage 3, Stage 4

Additional Titles Appropriate for Stage Two:

Adjectives & Opposites
 Cinema II-Life Skills
 Concentrate! I, II, III
 Dr. Peet's PictureWriter
 Early Emerging Rules Series: Negation, Plurals, Prepositions
 Early Songs & Play Collections I and II
 Easy Paint (IntelliPics Template)
 Easy Paint Underwater (IntelliPics Activity)
 Explore (IntelliPics Studio III Template)
 Explore Dinosaurs (IntelliPics Studio III Activity)
 Exploring First Verbs
 Exploring First Words I, II
 First Categories
 First Verbs
 First Words
 IntelliMathics III
 IntelliPics Studio III
 JumpStart Baby
 LADL Series (My House, My School, My Town)
 Match It
 MicroLADS: 1-7
 Old MacDonald's Farm Deluxe
 On the Farm
 Press to Play Series
 Scan and Paint
 Single Switch Games
 Stanley's Sticker Stories
 Storytime Songbook I, II
 SwitchIt! Farm
 SwitchIt! Maker
 SwitchIt! People
 SwitchIt! Weather
 Talking Nouns I, II
 Talking Verbs
 This Old Man
 Touch Balloons
 UKanDu Interactive Series: Camp Frog Hollow,
 KC & Clyde in Fly Ball
 Wheels on the Bus
 Words Around Me

